

Message Text

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ACTION SP-02

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 10876

FROM STEVENS, PC/VENEZUELA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SGEN, VE

SUBJECT: FY 1976 PEACE CORPS PROGRAM

REF: STATE 236947, PARAGRAPH 5

A. HOST GOVERNMENT AT NATIONAL LEVEL HAS NOT HERETOFORE BEEN INVOLVED IN CONTRIBUTIONS IN SUPPORT OF PEACE CORPS PROGRAMS. WHAT CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF INDIVIDUAL AGREEMENTS WITH PARTICULAR AGENCIES. THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WOULD MOST PROBABLY RESPOND NEGATIVELY TO ANY REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE PEACE CORPS PROGRAM WHICH WOULD NECESSITATE THE LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL OF NEW FUNDS SPECIFICALLY FOR SUCH SUPPORT. IF, HOWEVER, PEACE CORPS REQUESTED A CHANGE IN ITS PROGRAMMING STRUCTURE WHICH WOULD RESTRICT ALL FUTURE REQUEST TO THOSE FOR WHICH FUNDS ARE ALREADY APPROVED AND AVAILABLE, THE DECISION MADE BY THE GOV WOULD BE KEPT AT THE LEVEL OF PROGRAMMING AND THUS BE MADE BY THE NATIONAL PLANNING AGENCY RATHER THAN A DECISION ABOUT NEW FUNDS WHICH WOULD BE MADE BY THE VENEZUELAN CONGRESS.

B. IF REQUEST REQUIRED THE APPROVAL OF NEW MONEY FOR THE SUPPORT OF PEACE CORPS PROGRAMS, IT IS QUITE LIKELY THAT THE GOV WOULD REFUSE. IF THE REQUEST WERE FOR A STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN PEACE CORPS PROGRAMMING WHICH WOULD OBTAIN VENEZUELAN BUDGETARY SUPPORT WITHOUT THE ACQUISITION OF NEW FUNDS, THEN IT IS LESS LIKELY THAT

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THE GOV WOULD REFUSE THE REQUEST.

C. ONE OF THE EFFECTS WOULD BE TO REMOVE ONE OF THE LARGER, VISABLE AND MORE POSITIVE ELEMENTS OF THE IMAGE WHICH THE UNITED STATES PRESENTS TO THE VENEZUELAN PUBLIC. THE TWO MAJOR ELEMENTS WHICH WOULD REMAIN WOULD BE UNITED STATES EMPLOYEES OF UNITED STATES BUSINESSES IN VENEZUELA, OUR OFFICIAL ESTABLISHMENT-- I.E., THE EMBASSY, USIS AND MILITARY GROUP--AND, TO A MUCH LESSER EXTENT TOURISTS FROM THE UNITED STATES.

D. NOT APPLICABLE.

E. A MAJOR DETERMINANT OF THE QUALITY OF PEACE CORPS PROGRAMS IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE RECEIVING ENTITY ACTUALLY INVESTS MONEY, TIME AND MATERIALS IN THE SERVICE WHICH THAT ENTITY IS RECEIVING. SINCE THE GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA HAS THE CAPACITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUPPORT OF PEACE CORPS PROGRAMS, A REFUSAL OF SUCH SUPPORT WOULD CLEARLY IMPLY THAT THE GOV DOES NOT CONSIDER THE PROGRAM VALUABLE. THE REQUEST FOR SUPPORT SHOULD DEFINITELY BE MADE; HOWEVER, PC/VENEZUELA CONSIDERS PHASING DOWN PEACE CORPS PROGRAM AS INADQUATE RESPONSE TO SUCH REFUSAL SINCE A SMALLER PROGRAM WOULD BE AS INADEQUATELY SUPPORTED AS WOULD A LARGE PROGRAM.
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